

LOCAL PROMISING IDEAS AND PRACTICES

Expand Education and Training Opportunities

CJST Office Career Program. A 22-week full-time CJST program (8 am to 5pm) Monday through Friday. Instructors act like supervisors from day one of the program. Students receive both “soft-skills” along with technical skills. Basic education is fully integrated into the curriculum. At the end of the first quarter, students enter into internships with business partners and work for the employer four days a week (8 hours a day). Some internships are paid. Students continue to spend one day a week in class expanding and refining their skills. If the student needs to meet with their DSHS worker, that worker comes to the class to see them. The business partners also assist with mock interviews.

Partners: South Puget Sound Community College, DSHS and local business partners
Program Impacts: Providing certified entry-level office workers. The program has successfully prepared many of the students for Office Assistant III positions with both state agencies and private sector employers – earning \$11 - \$13 per hour and more. Many of the internship sponsors have hired graduates.
Resources: WorkFirst Block Grant and business partners donated time.
Policy Changes: None
Benefits: An integrated program that prepares TANF parents for office professions at better than entry-level wages.
Contact: Yvette Wixson, Interim Director, WorkFirst, South Puget Sound Community College, 360-596-5401

Integrated GED preparation Classes at WorkSource. GED classes are being provided to WorkFirst partners, while they are in job search activities at WorkSource. The majority of employers in Lewis County require a HS Diploma or GED. The attainment of a GED increases their chances of getting a job, particularly those jobs that pay higher than minimum wage. In addition, we believe that GED completion increases self-esteem and perhaps helps break generational poverty cycles.

Partners: WorkSource Lewis County and Centralia Community College
Program Impacts: Increase number of TANF parents completing their GED while in Job Search. Increased entered employments and continued education that leads to self-sufficiency. Approximately 20% of those that complete their GED go on to take other training.
Resources: WorkFirst Block Grant and leveraged space and materials by WorkSource Resource Sharing Agreement.
Policy Changes: None
Benefits: More TANF families exposed to education activities in an environment that they are comfortable. Bundling job readiness and education for greater outcomes.
Contact: Sandy Crews, LPA Lead, WorkSource Lewis County, 360-740-6881

EAGER –Entry, Assessment, GED, Employment and Retention. A WorkFirst Customized Community Initiative (CCI) project designed to expand access to intensive GED preparation for TANF parents prior to other participation activities. The training was designed to meet the individual learning needs of each parent. This project was received a Governor’s Award for Best Practice in 2005.

Partners: Everett Community College, DSHS and Employment Security Department (ESD)
Program Impacts: Increased access to GED preparation and attainment to WorkFirst parents. 122 enrolled over the 10 month program, 73 graduated (60%), 50% went to work and others went on to CJST or other training programs.

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Resources:	WorkFirst Block Grant, leveraged resources from DSHS and ESD and other community contributions
Policy Changes:	Yes, this project required some policy allowances to offer
Benefits:	All TANF parents enrolled in the program received bundled services including basic life skills, vocational training assessments, work skills, GED preparation and testing. Many were referred back to Job Search once the GED was completed. Having a GED helped them in getting a job in a community where many employers require a GED.
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